


August 10, 2021

**FOR YOUR INFORMATION**

**To:** Mayor and Members of Council

**From:** Paula Boggs Muething, City Manager 

**Subject:** Mount Washington Emergency Response on August 7, 2021

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On August 7, 2021, the City's Emergency Communications Center (ECC) received a 911 call from a mother in Mount Washington whose infant was nonresponsive. The call taker had difficulty hearing and understanding the distraught caller, including difficulty hearing the caller's address. Although Emergency Response was dispatched to the correct location, the difficulty in obtaining accurate information caused a delay of approximately 3 minutes and 45 seconds. Upon arrival, Emergency Response found that the infant had been deceased for some time. This is a tragedy, and the City's first responders and I express our deepest sympathies for the family. The Administration has received inquiries regarding this call and below are additional details and facts. I will update you as necessary.

At 2:05:48 p.m. on August 7, 2021, Cincinnati ECC received a call from an unidentified female in distress, crying for help and communicating that her child was not breathing. The call taker repeatedly asked the caller for her address. She did not provide a clear answer and was difficult to understand. Based on what the ECC call taker could discern, the call taker had reason to believe the emergency was occurring outside of Cincinnati and perhaps in Boone County. The call taker asked if she was in Boone County and the caller said "yes, I need help." The call taker transferred the call to Boone County but remained on the line. Boone County asked the caller to confirm her location, and the caller said, "No, I am in Cincinnati, Ohio." At 2:08:07 p.m. the Cincinnati ECC call taker took back the call. At 2:08:20 p.m., Engine 7, Medical Unit 46, and Advanced Life Support 32 were assigned to the response, and at 2:09:20 p.m., they were dispatched to the phase II location. Phase II is not an exact address but rather an approximate location based on the latitude and longitude location provided by cell phone GPS.

At 2:09:36 p.m., while the Fire and Emergency Medical System vehicles were enroute, the call taker proceeded to guide the caller through medical emergency response of how to perform infant CPR. The caller repeatedly stated that her baby was "gone" and ended the call at 2:12:05 p.m. The ECC call taker called back but was unable to reach the caller. At 2:13:14 p.m. the caller did not answer the call back attempt, and the ECC call taker released the outbound call.

At 2:13:39 p.m. EMS were in the area but reported a wrong address; the approximate GPS point used by EMS was adjacent to the caller's location, but the exact location was not clear to EMS as there are a number of apartment buildings in the immediate area. EMS requested call back information and for the caller to come outside. At 2:14:28 p.m., Cincinnati Police (CPD) was dispatched, a common occurrence with reports of a non-

responsive child. The call taker then went back to the original call recording and given additional information learned later in the call, with information provided by EMS, and with the opportunity to replay the call as needed, the call taker was able to decipher the exact address and update the address in computer aided dispatch at 2:15:25 p.m. At 2:16:37 p.m., Dispatch clarified to EMS that they are at the caller's location and provided the specific address, which indicated the building entrance on Roxbury. At 2:17:42 p.m., EMS arrived on scene and at 2:19:34 p.m. CPD arrived.

Medics declared the infant as deceased at the scene. There was indication that the time of death occurred some time earlier and possibly hours before the response. CPD Homicide arrived at 3:20:30 p.m., and investigators concluded that the fatality appeared to be accidental. CPD victims' support arrived at 5:25 p.m. to assist the mother.

Though it would not have changed the outcome in this case, this tragic event is another reminder of the difficulties presented with wireless phone calls to 911. Wireless/cellular connections are not always clear and reliable under the best of circumstances. And 911 calls can compound those challenges as they present difficult, often chaotic, environments with callers experiencing severe distress and panic. Moreover, as described above, wireless phone calls to 911 only provide a general location of the caller (Phase II), not an exact address, leaving first responders unable to immediately locate the caller in certain situations, particularly multi-unit residences. The Smart 911 technology deployed in the City's ECC allows users to connect a cell phone number to addresses, including home, school, and work. With this information, ECC and Emergency Responders can more readily determine the location of a call, helping to facilitate a faster response. The Administration urges everyone to sign up for Smart 911 today. For more information, please visit: <https://www.cincinnati-oh.gov/ecc/smart911/>

cc: Bill Vedra, ECC Director  
Chief Washington, Cincinnati Fire  
Chief Isaac, Cincinnati Police